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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Sentenced to More Than 18 Years in Prison for Crimes Committed as Leader of Congress Park Crew - Final Defendant Sentenced From 2007 Trial -

WASHINGTON - Antwuan Ball, 40, was sentenced today to a prison term of 18 years and nine months for drug-dealing activities that took place when he was the leader of the Congress Park Crew, a violent drug gang that operated in Southeast Washington.

The sentencing, in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., James W. McJunkin, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

Ball, also known as Big Ant, appeared before the Honorable Richard W. Roberts for sentencing for one count of unlawful distribution of five grams or more of crack cocaine. The judge cited the defendant's leadership role in the gang as well as his possession of guns during the time that he dealt crack cocaine in the Congress Park area.

Ball, of Washington, D.C., was one of six defendants prosecuted by the government during an eight-month trial in 2007. During that trial, the government presented evidence that Ball, along with his five co-defendants, Gregory Bell, aka Boy-Boy, Joseph Jones, aka Jo-Jo, Dominic Samuels, aka Don, Desmond Thurston, aka Daz, and David Wilson, also known as Cool Wop, as well as others, were members of a crew that had engaged in a series of crimes, including crack cocaine dealing, armed robbery, attempted murder, and murder in the Congress Park neighborhood of Southeast Washington for more than a decade.

Since March of 2005, 18 individuals have been indicted in connection with this case. Ball and his five-co-defendants were the final defendants remaining from the original March 2005 indictment. The others previously pled guilty or had been found guilty after trial.

The jury in this trial acquitted the six defendants of the charged conspiracy in this case, but convicted them on 18 other felony charges stemming from violence and drug-dealing.

Judge Roberts previously sentenced co-defendant Bell to a 16-year prison term. Jones was sentenced to a 15-year term, and Thurston to 16 years and two months. The jury was unable to reach a verdict against Samuels in the August 2002 murder of Jamel Sills, aka Black. However, Samuels subsequently pled guilty to manslaughter while armed and was sentenced to a seven-year prison term.

Wilson, another leader of the gang, was sentenced last week to the longest term for any of the defendants: 45 years and eight months in prison for his role in two murders and other crimes. The murder charges stemmed from the slayings of Ronnie "Squid" Middleton, 27, and Sabrina Bradley, 26, which took place early August 17, 1998 in the 1500 block of Congress Place SE.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen, Assistant Director McJunkin and Chief Lanier praised the collective and cooperative efforts of the law enforcement agencies that worked together to investigate and prosecute this complex case, including the MPD, the FBI/MPD Safe Streets Task Force, and the United States Park Police.

In addition, they commended the outstanding work of the Special Agents from the FBI's Washington Field Office; MPD Detectives Anthony Brigidini, Kenneth Todd Williams, Constantinos "Gus" Giannakoulis and Anthony Commodore; William Sepeck and Paul Edwards, of the U.S. Park Police, and Special Investigator Diane Eickman.

Also, they praised the staff at the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Paralegal Specialist James Mazzitelli; Victim-Witness Advocate Yvonne Bryant; Victim-Witness Specialists Katina Adams, LaVerne Forrest and Debbie Cannon; Intelligence Specialists Frank Morgan, Larry Grasso and Shannon Alexis, and Legal Assistants Dianne Brashears, Carolyn Carter-McKinley, Patricia Hall, and Nadi Ishman. They also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Glenn S. Leon, Ann Petalas, and Gilberto Guerrero Jr., who prosecuted the case, and former Assistant U.S. Attorney M. Jeffrey Beatrice, who led the initial investigation.